

REMARKS

Claims 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 are pending in this application. Claims 11 and 20 are amended. No new matter is added. Claims 12 and 18 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of the subject matter recited in the claims. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 12-14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Office Action objects to claims 17 and 18 under 35 C.F.R. §1.75 as being substantially duplicative. Claim 18 is canceled thus obviating the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 11, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruan (U.S. Patent No. 6,146,599) in view of Nelson 16 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0131916); rejects claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruan in view of Nelson 63 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0076363); and rejects claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ruan, Shinichi (JP Application Publication No. 2002-256853), Miyao

(JP Application Publication No. 2002-256851), and further in view of Fujii (U.S. Patent No. 6,596,243).

By this Amendment, claim 11 and similarly claim 20 are amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of canceled claim 12. Thus, claims 11 and 20 are allowable.

Claims 13, 14, 17 and 19 depend from claim 11, and therefore, are also allowable by virtue of their dependencies, as well as for the features that they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) and allowance are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Andy N. Kim
Registration No. 61,050

JAO:ANK/mjb

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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